

One century after its inception, Tea continues to be a valuable addition to the State of South Dakota and source of pride for all those who live there.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF PLANKINTON, SOUTH DAKOTA

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the 125th anniversary of the founding of the city of Plankinton, SD. As the county seat of Aurora County, this progressive community has been a center of commercial and civic activity since its inception.

This vibrant community was laid out by General Lawler of the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company, after he purchased the land from the founding settler, Ira Wooden. The town was named "Merrill" initially but was later changed to Plankinton after a wealthy Milwaukee meat packer. The original town plat was eight blocks north of the railway and three to the south. In August of 1880, the first building was erected: a one-story frame building about 12 feet by 20 feet in size, which became a saloon. A post office and bank were constructed shortly thereafter.

Now Plankinton is home to three churches; a thriving business community, including the South Dakota Mail weekly newspaper; and excellent hunting and fishing. The new high school building is a point of regional pride, having been built following a tragic fire at the former building. Home to the South Dakota State Training School for many years, that campus awaits possible redevelopment.

I am pleased to announce that Plankinton will be celebrating its 125th anniversary with a community celebration on June 23 to June 25. There are numerous events scheduled including a golf tournament, time capsule opening, demolition derby, and a parade. This celebration is a fitting way to recognize Plankinton's long and productive history.

Even 125 years after its founding, Plankinton continues to be a vital community and a great asset to the wonderful State of South Dakota. I am proud to publicly honor Plankinton on this memorable occasion.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF HARTFORD, SOUTH DAKOTA

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the 125th anniversary of the founding of the town of Hartford, SD. Home to over 2,000 residents, Hartford is a vibrant and flourishing town.

The area was originally known as Oaksville, after an early settler, I.E. Oakes. However, in 1879, the Oaksville train depot was renamed "Hartford" by two travelers from Hartford, CT. The settlement took shape in 1881, when a post office was established. Stores, hotels, grain warehouses, and other businesses soon followed. In 1896, the citi-

zens of Hartford petitioned the county commissioners to hold an election to incorporate the area as the "Town of Hartford." After holding an election, the town was divided into three districts and trustees were elected.

Hartford's city motto, "Hartford on the Right Road," captures the progressive nature of the community. The city is located just west of Sioux Falls, in Minnehaha County, and has a volunteer fire department, law enforcement, churches, and many civic organizations. In addition to the many businesses already located in Hartford, the Hartford Area Development Corporation is working to bring even more commerce and industry to the area. The community is served by the Hartford Area News weekly newspaper. In downtown Hartford, the Hartford Area Veterans Memorial honors all the men and women of Hartford who have served our country in a war.

Hartford celebrated its 125th anniversary with a Quasiquicentennial Jamboree Celebration from June 1 to June 4. There were carnivals, parades, softball tournaments, golf tournaments, and even paintball and XBOX tournaments. The celebration reflected the enthusiasm the residents of Hartford have toward commemorating the history of their wonderful community.

More than a century after its founding, Hartford continues to be a great asset to South Dakota. I am proud to honor the achievements of Hartford on this memorable occasion.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF HOWARD, SOUTH DAKOTA

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 125th anniversary of the founding of Howard, SD. Howard is a progressive community, offering many opportunities to a variety of people, and is also the county seat of Miner County.

The city of Howard is the first municipality to own and operate their own wind turbines to supply electricity to the entire city. In recent years, it has become a regional economic development leader through efforts such as the Miner County Community Revitalization and the new Rural Learning Center. These are examples of the innovative and progressive ideas abounding in Howard. Though agriculture is the primary driver of Howard's economy, the community has found many ways to diversify. In particular, Howard has developed an excellent local technology infrastructure, helping to attract new businesses. The community is served by the Miner County Pioneer newspaper.

In addition to this healthy business climate, Howard boasts some of the world's best hunting and fishing. In the third week in October, sportsmen come from around the globe to hunt pheasant in this hotspot. Howard is also near Lake Thompson, the largest natural lake in South Dakota, and home to excellent walleye fishing.

Howard is celebrating its 125th anniversary with a variety of events. The festivities start with an all-school reunion, including students, alumni, and faculty at Howard or St. Agatha schools. Other events include a road race, parade, children's games, baseball, music, and fireworks. The events will be held on July 1st through the 4th.

Even 125 years after its founding, Howard remains a vital community and a great asset to the wonderful State of South Dakota. I am pleased to honor this lively city on such a memorable occasion, and offer my congratulations on this historic milestone.●

TRIBUTE TO ALABAMA'S VESTAVIA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to make some remarks today about Alabama's State champion and national finalist in the "We the People" competition. Vestavia Hills High School placed fourth in the national We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution national finals, held in Washington, DC. This impressive competition, headed by the Center for Civic Education, engaged young people in the fundamental ideals and values of American constitutional government.

Members of this remarkable team from Vestavia Hills included Grace Anthony, Georgiy Bolshinskiy, Barrett Bowdre, Courtney Bragg, Jeannette Dooley, Daniel Driscoll, Claire Foster, Sarah Graffeo, Lauren Howard, Sarah McKibben, Patrick Mulligan, John Nicholson, Tiffany Parrish, Hanna Perry, John Phillips, Joseph Siegelman, Mary Kendal Spires, William Edward Stevenson, Emily Unnasch, Amy Watson, Ryan Woodford, and Ansley Zarra.

I congratulate Amy Maddox, the teacher who led this fine team. Teachers shape the future, and I appreciate Ms. Maddox's investment in these students. As a former educator and the father of three children, I have a great admiration for educators, and I am grateful that educators like Ms. Maddox are making a difference.

I thank U.S. District Judge Karon Bowdre for her involvement and support of the Vestavia Hills High School team. Judge Bowdre is a person of great intellectual and academic ability who understands and reveres our Constitution. I am very proud that she has given of her talents to this worthy project.

I thank Janice Cowin, the executive director of the Alabama Center for Law and Civic Education.

I applaud the efforts of students, teachers, and community leaders who made this accomplishment possible. Vestavia Hills High School is an exceptional school and has represented Alabama well. I encourage these students to continue pursuing a deep understanding of the Constitution and our Government. It is important that we raise up quality leaders who will serve our country in years to come.●